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EDITORIAL COMMENT



TWO SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOUR

IN the May JOURNAL, we commented somewhat broadly on the subject of professional responsibility. Developments during the month make it imperative that certain specific responsibilities which are pressing upon us must be met promptly and courageously, if the nursing profession is to hold its place in the work of the Red Cross, and in the crusade against tuberculosis.

The tornado in Mississippi, resulting in an appeal from the National Red Cross for nurses to care for the sick and injured, has been the first real test of the efficiency of the Red Cross nursing service, as at the time of the San Francisco disaster, the society was not sufficiently reorganized in regard to its nursing service, for that experience to be considered.

The facts in the recent disaster, briefly stated are these:

The tornado occurred on April 26th. Immediately Governor Noel telegraphed to the president of the United States for assistance. The president referred the call to the War Department and the Red Cross. Major Dovell, U. S. A., was sent down to the devastated section on April 28th, representing both the War Department and the Red Cross. He reported two hundred sick and injured in need of immediate care. The Red Cross issued a call for nurses on April 30th; six nurses, including a competent head nurse, were sent from the District of Columbia, on May 2nd, on the same day six went from Philadelphia, representing the Pennsylvania branch, and on May 5th six more went from New York.

Judging from these facts, one is given the impression of prompt and efficient service, but knowing the inner side of the story, the nursing profession is given some cause for serious reflection.

In Washington, where forty-three nurses were enrolled, Miss Nevins,

a member of the Nurses' Committee in the District of Columbia, was called upon by Miss Boardman, on the morning of May 2nd, and by giving the entire day to it, succeeded in finding by telephone six of the enrolled nurses and starting them off that evening. This was done with much difficulty, as quite naturally the families in which the nurses were engaged, absolutely refused to give them up. Those who did go, secured substitutes to take their places. Miss Nevins feels that with a sufficiently large enrollment, it would be possible to secure all nurses necessary, even in a great disaster.

The promptness and efficiency of the manner in which the work was handled in Washington, brought a letter of congratulation from President Roosevelt to the Washington Division of the Red Cross.

In Pennsylvania, when the call was received at the state headquarters in Philadelphia, there were no nurses enrolled for Red Cross service. The officer in charge telephoned to the superintendent of the Medico Chirurgical Training School, who, in exactly nineteen minutes, enrolled six of her graduates and started them off the same evening for Mississippi.

In New York State, at the headquarters in New York City, there were forty regularly enrolled nurses. Three had previously reported themselves as being out of the city. Letters were immediately sent to the remaining thirty-seven, asking each nurse if she could respond if called to the Mississippi District. Nineteen replied giving satisfactory reasons why they could not serve, *eleven sent no answers of any kind*, seven replied that they would go if needed.

Of the seven who said they would go, four responded when, two days later, they were called upon, one from Rochester, two from Troy and one from New York City; one other New York City nurse, who had originally signified that she was engaged, reported at the office on the morning of May 5th, that she was free and arranged to go that afternoon. The one still needed, could not be obtained from among those so enrolled and with Miss Goodrich's assistance, a recent graduate as yet unregistered, of the Bellevue School, was pressed into the service. Of the three who failed to respond when called, one was from New York, two from Rochester, one of these sending no explanation to the Red Cross office, although she did notify the local treasurer to whom she was to apply for funds, that she was unable to serve.

Fortunately the number of nurses needed for this emergency was not large. Undoubtedly there were hundreds of nurses sitting idle, both in the states of Pennsylvania and New York, who would have responded without a moment's notice if they had known that they were

needed. Under the present method adopted by the Red Cross society, it is shown by this experience, that the enrollment must be very large, in order to be able to secure anything like an adequate number when an emergency occurs. It has shown also a lack of appreciation of the seriousness of the responsibility assumed when enrolling for service in the Red Cross. It is a question whether hospital officers and head nurses should enroll for this service except for home emergencies. It would seem to be a kind of service belonging to the private duty nurse, most especially and to those nurses who, at the moment, are not otherwise engaged. We doubt if any one of our nursing organizations could be called upon to supply a number of nurses for any emergency, where the results would not have been better than in the case of the New York Red Cross. Almost any superintendent of a representative training school could do what was done by the head of the school referred to in Philadelphia.

The question before us is how to bring all of our forces so into coöperation with the Red Cross that prompt and efficient service may always be at the command of that society without unnecessary delays.

We understand that the Red Cross is having quite as much difficulty in the enrollment of physicians for its service as it is for the enrollment of nurses. There seems to be an unwillingness on the part of both of these groups of workers without whose services the Red Cross is almost powerless, to pledge themselves for service so uncertain in its character, and yet when we think of it, uncertainty is the predominating element in the life both of the physician and the nurse.

All other considerations in connection with the Red Cross are secondary to this one of efficient enrollment. It should be taken up by every local organization and carried into our state and national conventions until the problem has been satisfactorily threshed out. Otherwise the Red Cross will be forced to train its own workers.

As we go to press we learn through the New York office that the nurses sent out have found plenty to do, in actual nursing, day and night duty. Miss Pettit, the head nurse, was asked by Captain Ashford to coöperate with Major Simpson and himself in the distribution of clothing and supplies. The nurses who went out first from Washington and Pennsylvania, were very tired when the New York delegation arrived and were glad of the additional assistance. No report has been received as to the time when they are likely to return. We shall be able to give a full account of the experiences of these nurses, with their names, next month.

THE TUBERCULOSIS CRUSADE

In the tuberculosis crusade which is now fully under way the most advanced authorities agree that the home is the place where the battle is to be fought out. The incipient patient will not leave his home. Sanatorium treatment while bringing the quickest results is not practical for the vast majority. Local day camps in conjunction with *home supervision* must be generally relied upon—success depending upon the visiting tuberculosis nurse. This opens up a great field and there would seem to be no reason why a really good nurse who is willing to work and is ready to take such cases as need her services should ever for a moment sit idle.

In the tuberculosis work, it devolves upon the nurse to make the practical application of the plans established by the medical men and the lay public. She deals directly and personally with the individual patient, teaching, instructing, encouraging and comforting, acting as a means of communication between these three groups of people. While we would not lose sight for a single moment of the importance of the fitting of nurses for what we commonly recognize as private duty, we cannot ignore the necessity of preparing her for broader fields, in which her responsibilities are farther reaching in scope than the most far seeing of the pioneers ever deemed could be possible. The stimulating of this sense of responsibility to the public, rests largely with the training schools during the formative period of the nurse's professional life. It calls for a high order of intelligence, both in the teacher and the pupil.

But we cannot wait for new nurses to be trained for this work. Like the Red Cross enrollment it is pressing, it is a responsibility of to-day, and the nurses of to-day must take up the burden and carry it with courage.

THE TUBERCULOSIS MEETING IN WASHINGTON

MISS DOCK, the acting Secretary of the Nurses' Committee, sends us the following:

"The exact day of the special session for nurses at the Congress on Tuberculosis has not been made known. It will be fixed by Mr. Devine, the president of the section in which it will be included. We had hoped to announce it in this number, but can now only say that it will be in the week of September 28th to October 3rd.

"A large and representative number of nurses have been asked to serve on the Nurses' Committee, namely: Miss Florence Baldwin, of Portland, Oregon; Miss Mary Gardner, of Providence, R. I.; Miss Mary Hills, of

New Haven, Conn.; Miss Mary Kershaw, of Columbus, O.; Mrs. Quintard, Philadelphia; Mrs. Lupinski, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Miss Fulmer and Miss Tillinghast, Chicago; Miss Lucy Fisher and Miss Ashe, of San Francisco; Miss Boyd and Miss Smithwick, of Denver; Miss Matilda Johnson, Cleveland, O.; Miss Strong, of Washington, D. C.; Miss Cabaniss, Richmond, Va.; Miss La Motte and Miss Tent, Baltimore; Miss Coleman, Miss Stark, and Miss Upjohn, of Boston, with the original members, Miss McKechnie, Miss Nutting, Miss Hitchcock, Miss Damer, Miss Wald, Miss Goodrich, Mrs. Robb, and Miss Maxwell.

"Most of the committee are actively engaged in tuberculosis work, and many will write papers. Mrs. Robb, Miss Damer, Miss Fulmer, and Miss Wald are down for the general sessions. The nurses' session will give opportunity for every practical point and problem to be brought forward. Some material is also expected from foreign countries. Of special importance is the problem of occupation, both for the incipient and the cured or improved case. Anyone having knowledge of intelligent attempts to meet this need is asked to report on it.

"It is not expected that any *separate* exhibits showing the nurse's field will be arranged, but nursing will be shown in connection with the exhibits of dispensaries, states, etc. It is especially desirable that workers in the tuberculosis propaganda should take great pains to present their work in the most complete and striking manner possible, by working up every sort of exhibit that can be made, and nurses are urged to make an impressive showing."

Miss Isabel L. Strong, of Washington, makes the suggestion that in view of the fact that so large a number of nurses are expected, those intending to be present, should send their names and addresses as early as possible, to Mrs. Eustis, chairman of the Committee on Nurses, office of the Instructive Visiting Nurses Society, 2001 I Street, Washington, D. C., so that they may obtain information as to reasonable accommodations and be notified of projected plans for their entertainment.

THE ALMSHOUSE CRUSADE

WE also learn from Miss Dock that in the almshouse crusade Mrs. Crane has had the satisfaction of seeing another Michigan almshouse appoint a trained nurse. This happened in Lenarvee County and was the direct result of an appeal made by the County Federation of Women's Clubs. The authorities also made an appropriation for the nurse's salary, so that it was not necessary for the women to undertake this, though they were ready to do so.

Reports on almshouses now coming in indicate a general absence of nursing in almshouses, and, often, very sad and distressing conditions. Nurses who investigate are asked to write their impressions quite fully on the back of the census, and not to hesitate to describe bad conditions, as their names will not appear, nor will they be placed in any embarrassing situation. Reports may be sent in all summer, and next winter our State Societies will be asked to make an active campaign for reforms.

NEW WORK FOR BABIES

A NEW work was started at Bellevue Hospital, New York, May 1st. This work is the idea of Mr. Robert Bruère, General Agent of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and the nurse selected to carry out the idea is Miss H. Grace Franklin, R.N., graduate and post-graduate of the New York City Training School for Nurses.

Miss Franklin attends all of Dr. F. S. Mearas' clinics at the Bellevue Dispensary, becomes acquainted with the children and their mothers and whenever necessary follows these cases to their homes, instructing the mother in the care of herself and baby by trying to impress upon her the directions given by the physician at the dispensary and by practical demonstration gives the mother the proper knowledge of caring for her baby.

There is a special fund provided by which milk, nursing bottles, nipples, sugar of milk, etc., can be bought for the child if the family are unable to procure them.

Should she find in her visits that the family is in destitute circumstances, the case is at once taken up by the Registration Bureau.

She not only follows up these dispensary cases but visits every child discharged from Dr. Mearas' Ward.

The idea of the work is to prevent dispensary cases from becoming hospital charges and the discharged hospital cases returning again to the ward. The work is experimental and promises to be as valuable as so many of the experiments originated and put into practice by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The work is affiliated with the Department of Convalescent Relief of Bellevue Hospital.

SPECIAL NOTICE

THE SCHOLARSHIP IN HOSPITAL ECONOMICS

THE American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools offers a scholarship of the value of three hundred dollars, for the year 1908-1909, in the Course in Hospital Economics at Teachers' College.

Candidates for this scholarship must meet the requirements of the College in regard to general education and of the Hospital Economics Committee as to their professional training and special attainments.

Final details concerning this are now being arranged, and those desiring information should refer to Miss A. Goodrich, Chairman of Hospital Economics Committee, before August 1st.

There is no question before the nursing profession to-day of such burning importance as the maintenance and development of the course in hospital economics. Our progress must be through education and in education our teachers must be in the future as they have been in the past, our most important leaders. The Society of Superintendents, in establishing this scholarship of three hundred dollars, emphasize again the importance of the teaching body and by its liberality sets an example which other organizations should emulate according to their means.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MEETING

WE have been planning for a number of months past to publish the secretary's report of the proceedings of the San Francisco Convention in this issue of the JOURNAL, knowing that so many of the stay-at-homes would be waiting anxiously to know the result of the meeting. We learn at the eleventh hour that it has been decided to postpone all official announcements until the July issue. We know however that the journey out was in every way most delightful, the hospitality shown to those traveling together in Chicago, Colorado Springs and Denver was charming, and "a glorious time" has been the word sent back from San Francisco.

Miss Damer's reelection as president, with Miss Sly as secretary and Miss Davids as treasurer, was practically a foregone conclusion. It is intended to give the lists of officers, committees, the names of the affiliated associations, etc., with a condensed report of the proceedings in the July issue. Dr. Criswell's address of welcome is the first of the papers and others will appear in subsequent numbers.

The next meeting is to be held in Minnesota.

THE CINCINNATI MEETING

THE meeting of Superintendents of Training Schools in Cincinnati, the secretary's report of which is found on another page, was a most inspiring occasion. Mrs. Robb's election as president with the next

meeting to be held in New York City, means a year of progress. There is much work commenced to be rounded out. There are many problems pressing that must be solved. Mrs. Robb who organized the society in Chicago, 1903, has had a long interval of rest from public life. She will bring broader experiences to bear upon nursing questions, and the inspiration of her leadership cannot fail to arouse the entire teaching body to greater effort.

There has been but one opinion in regard to hospitality of Cincinnati. Those who enjoyed it must long remember the occasion with pleasure, while those who missed it will long regret being obliged to stay at home.

WHERE COMPLAINTS ARE TO BE MADE

Miss M. E. DAVIS is again installed in the Philadelphia office as business manager of the JOURNAL and requests that all complaints in regard to subscriptions or failures to receive JOURNALS, changes of address, etc., shall be addressed personally to her. Miss Davis gives her personal supervision to such details that are so annoying to our readers when they occur.

To give some idea of the problem of changes of address that our office had to contend with, recently circulars were sent to the personal addresses of all the members of the Associated Alumnæ. In just one month twelve hundred letters have been returned because of changes of address.

All subscribers to the JOURNAL who would like to add still another mark of their appreciation and yet have hesitation in bringing the matter of subscribing, personally, to the attention of their friends, may as effectually aid in the desired result, by sending to this office the names and addresses of one or more non-subscribing friends.

We will do the rest!

